

VZCZCXRO0676  
OO RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHPG #0628/01 2681555  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 241555Z SEP 08  
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0716  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1954  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAMDA/MDA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000628

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/23/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [EZ](#)  
SUBJECT: CZECH MISSILE DEFENSE VOTE: 101 VOTES STILL IN  
SIGHT

REF: A. 9 SEPTEMBER 2008 PRAGUE DAILY  
[1](#)B. 11 SEPTEMBER 2008 PRAGUE DAILY  
[1](#)C. PRAGUE 613  
[1](#)D. PRAGUE 604

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Mary Thompson-Jones, reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The bizarre blackmail scandal roiling Czech PM Topolanek,s Civic Democratic Party (ODS) does not currently threaten support for missile defense legislation, nor does it currently seem likely to bring down the Czech government, although the margins of support for both remain narrow. ODS MPs angered at MP Topolanek over the scandal are not changing their pro-missile defense stance. At this point, opposition Social Democrat Party (CSSD) leader Jiri Paroubek can come close, but probably cannot muster, the 101 votes needed to win a no-confidence vote. The government remains committed to bringing missile defense legislation to a vote before the end of the year. End Summary.

Bizarre Scandal Does Not Erode MD Support  
-----

[1](#)2. (U) A bizarre blackmail scandal that broke in early September has resulted in the resignation of ODS MP Jan Morava, the resignation from the party caucus (but not the party itself) of ODS MPs Jan Schwippel and Juraj Raninec, and the alienation of ODS MP Vlastimil Tlusty. The scandal started when a media outlet caught Morava, a Topolanek ally, in an attempt to buy fake compromising photos of Tlusty, a Topolanek rival. Tlusty was a willing participant in manufacturing the photos.

[1](#)3. (C) While spectacular, the scandal has not yet eroded ODS votes in parliament in support of missile defense legislation. Morava will be replaced by an ODS reliable (ref a). Schwippel has publicly and privately said he still firmly supports missile defense despite the scandal, and privately, that DFM Pojar confirmed to Schwippel that Tlusty and Raninec still do as well (ref b). At a September 24 breakfast at the Ambassador,s residence, even Prague,s ODS Mayor Pavel Bem, another Topolanek rival, asserted that he was &100 percent certain<sup>8</sup> that &Moravagate<sup>8</sup> would not affect support for missile defense in parliament.

[1](#)4. (C) That said, the margin of support for missile defense legislation in parliament still remains razor-thin ) for now, probably exactly the 101 votes needed for ratification and, as DFM Pojar told the Ambassador on September 15, that number is ~ secure<sup>8</sup> (ref c).

101 No-Confidence Votes Close, But Hard to Come By  
-----

15. (C) Opposition CSSD leader Jiri Paroubek has vowed to bring a no-confidence vote to parliament after the second round of regional and Senate elections on October 24 and 25. This would be the third no-confidence vote since Topolaneck,s government took office in January 2007; the most recent vote was in April. A successful no-confidence vote could well derail efforts to bring missile defense legislation to a vote, despite MP support on the merits.

16. (C) However, at this point, despite the vicious ODS infighting, Paroubek does not appear to have the 101 votes required by the Czech Constitution to topple the government. He can count on 70 CSSD and 26 Communists to support a no-confidence vote. After that, Paroubek can come close, but five votes against the government will be hard to come by:

-- CSSD defectors Michal Pohanka and Milos Melcak voted with the government in April. CSSD deputies Evzen Snitily and Petr Wolf voted against the government in April, but have since left the CSSD and have no reason to side with Paroubek. Snitily has avoided most votes since leaving CSSD.

-- Despite being ODS malcontents, Schwippel and Raninec have said they would not bring down the Topolaneck government if it would lead to a leftist8 (read: CSSD) government; they say they will vote against the Topolaneck government only if there is a clear alternative.8 So far, there is none.

-- ODS malcontent Tlusty is a wild card. The scandal has left Topolaneck and the ODS leadership furious at Tlusty. Tlusty,s local ODS chapter refused to expel him from the

PRAGUE 00000628 002 OF 002

party, but Tlusty has been shorn of power within the ODS, is unlikely to regain his stature for the foreseeable future, and would be out of national politics if a no-confidence vote resulted in early elections. Yet emotion, and his rivalry with Topolaneck, could get the better of Tlusty.

-- Coalition partner Green Party MPs Olga Zubova and Vera Jakubkova are openly dissatisfied with Green Party leader Martin Bursik. Zubova was tangentially involved in the byzantine scandal (Morava also sought compromising information on her daughter) and has in the past suggested withdrawing from the government (ref d). However, both Zubova and Jakubkova voted with the government in April. Despite intense media speculation about their intentions, neither Zubova nor Jakubkova has indicated publicly she would switch and vote against the government.

-- Coalition partner Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak Peoples, Party (KDU/CSL) MP Ludvik Hovorka is the most uncertain vote in his party (Hovorka is also sitting on the fence on missile defense); however, he too supported the government in April.

17. (C) Comment: Support for both missile defense and Topolaneck,s government remain close, but for the moment, sufficient. The government remains committed to bringing missile defense legislation to a vote before the end of the year. Post remains cautiously optimistic that both Topolaneck and his shaky coalition government will survive a tumultuous autumn. The fighting within ODS could, however, complicate the government's ability to pass other legislative priorities including tax reform, changes to the electoral law, and church restitution. End Comment.

Graber